



Testimony of Carol Scully
Director of Advocacy, The Arc of Connecticut, Inc.
LCO No. 3833 H.B. 6616 An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits
To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status

February 13, 2023

Members of the Human Services Committee: Co-Chair Representative Gilchrest, Co-Chair Senator Lessor, Vice Chair Senator Herron Gaston, Vice Chair Representative Lucy Datham, Ranking Member Senator Lisa Seminara, Ranking Member Representative Jay Case, Senator Mahar, Representative Butler, Representative Cook, Representative Comey, Representative Exum, Representative Fortier, Representative Hughes, Representative Johnson, Representative Keitt, Representative Leeper, Representative Santiago, Representative Buckbee, Representative Ferraro, Representative Mastrofrancesco, Representative Pizzuto, Representative Polleta

The Arc Connecticut is the oldest and the largest community-based organization advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. We work tirelessly to uphold our vision that every individual and family living with I/DD has access to the information, advocacy, and skills they need to support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

We are a chapter of The Arc of The United States, which has 675 chapters in 49 states and over 5,000 service locations. Nationwide, we have approximately 7,000 board members, 124,000 staff, 46,000 volunteers and collectively we serve more than 1 million people with I/DD and their family members.

In Connecticut, our 14 Arc local chapters deliver over \$100 million in jobs, supports and services to thousands of people in 162 communities. Together Arcs are the largest provider of supports and services for people with I/DD and their families in the state, providing about 96% of the services.

The Arc of Connecticut supports H.B. 6616 expanding access to HUSKY regardless of age and immigration status. There are approximately 113,000 undocumented immigrants in Connecticut, nearly 60% of them are uninsured this puts them at risk of not receiving medical care. (Mitigation Policy Institute). Legally present immigrants are also at risk of being uninsured as they are also ineligible for HUSKY until they have been in the country for 5 years. Statewide the uninsured rate is approximately 5.9%. An undetermined number of undocumented immigrants may have children over the age of 8 who are intellectually developmentally disabled or have Autism and who are at risk of not getting the services and supports that would enable them to live their best lives in the community. The lack of a medical diagnosis of intellectual developmental disability and Autism by the age of 18 would exclude these children from qualifying for supports as an adult.

H.B. 6616 would give these families access to services to help their children as well as provide help to adults with intellectual developmental disabilities and Autism. A Rand Health study estimates that an additional 21,000 undocumented immigrants would enroll in HUSKY. The cost to include this population is an estimated 3% of the state's annual Medicaid budget.

It is estimated that undocumented immigrants pay \$125 million in state and local taxes in Connecticut, but those tax dollars do not give them access to healthcare. It is estimated that immigration reform on the national level would provide an additional 20.5 million in taxes to Connecticut (Public News Service).

This is an equity issue for persons who are undocumented and an economic issue for the state's healthcare system. It is estimated that hospitals could save anywhere from 63-72 million on uncompensated care annually, money that could offset the high cost of healthcare in Connecticut. (CT Mirror)

The legislature has debated Medicare for undocumented immigrants for many years. This year, a study released in July 2022 by the Office of Health Strategy, clearly indicates that this is the year to pass this legislation.

The Arc of Connecticut urges the Human Services Committee to pass H.B. 6616

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